



Cpl. Virgil P. Richardson

(Above) Members of the Headquarters Co. team are led by Sgt. Michael Batton, Visitors Center, as they struggle against Service Co. in a game of tug of war at the 3rd Annual Field Meet June 9. Although Headquarters Co. won the tug of war, Service Co. won the field meet to claim the battalion trophy for the first time in several months. (Right) Members of Service Co.'s 4X100 Relay team pass the baton off during one of the many field meet events at the Depot track June 9. Other events included an M-16A2 service rifle disassembly/re-assembly and an obstacle course relay.



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Service Co. dominates semi-annual field meet

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STAFF WRITER

The Marines of H&S Bn. participated in their semi-annual field meet at the Depot Track June 9. For the first time in more than three years, Service Co. walked away with the victory and the coveted Battalion Commander's Trophy.

The Headquarters Co. Marines came out of the gate quickly, winning all of the first three events. With easy victories at the obstacle course, pull-ups and crunches events, it looked like a rout early. As the meet relocated from the 2nd RTBn. physical training field to the Depot track, the overwhelming numbers advantage of Service Co. turned the tides.

"Unfortunately, we didn't have the turnout we expected, which caused fewer numbers of participants in events," said Capt. Brad Anderson, Headquarters Co. commander. "In some cases, we had Marines competing in four or five events. Our smaller numbers equated to fatigued Marines faster."

With fresh legs and another decisive advantage, the Svc Co. Marines turned things around on the first relay event.

With three teams full of armors, Service Co. swept first through third place in the M16 assembly/disassembly relay. That turned out to be the turning point in what became a very long day for the Headquarters Co. Marines.

With victories in the 4x100 and 4x400 relay events, Service Co. slowly pulled away. In the end, even a victory in the tug of war could not pull out a victory for Headquarters Co.

While both teams admit winning was important, the unit cohesion built by the field meet was the true event of the day, said Anderson.

"Sure, we all wanted to win, because to accept failure in our business equates to death and combat loss, but the whole point of the event was beyond just winning - it was for good, old-fashioned camaraderie,"

said Anderson. Captain Timothy Hough, Service Co. commander, agreed with Anderson, saying teamwork was the main focus of the battalion.

"The tremendous teamwork that was displayed at the field meet is exhibited by Service Company Marines on a day to day

basis," he said. "I could not have been happier with the outcome. Every Marine put forth an outstanding effort."

The relationships built by events like the field meet are the main reason the Service Co. team had so many more Marines show up, said Hough.

"The relationships that have been built throughout Service Company, both in the past and today, have made the company as successful as it is," said Hough. "There truly is a family feel with this company. We all know that we can lean on each other for help and support. I think that showed with the participation level and the outcome of the field meet."

While Anderson and his Headquarters Co. Marines would have liked to win the trophy for the fourth time in a row, the loss is seen as a temporary problem.

"In retrospect, we held that trophy for three straight field meets, and that there is always the next field meet in December," said Anderson. "I was happy with the performance of all Marines out there, and we hold no grudges at this point. [We're just] 'temp-loaning' the trophy over to Service Company for a few months."

Quick to point out the outstanding job done by their competitors, both company commanders pointed out the real-world benefits of competitions like the field meet.

"I think a lot of cohesion at the battalion level can be produced through competitiveness at the company level," said Hough.

"I'm confident that in battle, those Marines over there would watch my back, fight hard to keep me safe, and focus on the mission, the way we all should," said Anderson.

Depot Marine graduates with honors, earns perfect GPA

CPL. VIRGIL P. RICHARDSON
STAFF WRITER

Marines have a time-honored tradition of excellence. While public perception often defines the Corps as "the best of the best," perfection is rarely possible. However, one Depot Marine has found a way to achieve just that.

Master Sgt. Donald Downey, Tri-Command Traffic Management Office chief, graduated Summa Cum Laude from Park University June 1 with a perfect 4.0 grade point average. From the time he began taking classes in his off-duty time while stationed in Okinawa, Downey never received a grade less than an A.

"One day I'll learn to read a little," joked Downey.

The candor with which he downplays his success is typical of his modesty, said Dr. Ronald

J. Curtis, Park University Beaufort campus center director.

"He certainly never let his success affect his ego," said Curtis. "He worked hard, studied hard, and succeeded. He never found it necessary to call attention to himself."

An admitted self-motivator, Downey used most of his spare time for school. Although he had struggles, his desire to finish was enough to push him to continue.

"I had to make myself study at times," he said. "Even when I wanted to do anything else, I had to make time to fulfill my responsibilities."

That motivation is what Curtis hopes will be an example for other students to follow.

"The thing that makes him stand out in my mind is his academic motivation for success," said Curtis. "He truly set the tone for others to follow."

Filling up his free time with



"At one point, my wife, daughter and I were all taking classes at Park together."

– Master Sgt. Donald Downey, Summa Cum Laude graduate from Park University

school eventually took its toll on him, Downey said.

When it got to the point where he did not want to do it any more, he did what he says was the smart thing to do.

"I stopped going," he said. "When it got to the point where I was burned out, I took breaks where I needed to."

Losing time away from his family at night to attend classes was not an issue for Downey. In fact, the Downey family found a way to make attending classes a family affair.

"At one point, my wife,

daughter and I were all taking classes at Park together," said Downey. "My wife and daughter even had a class together. We got to spend plenty of time together doing something we all enjoyed."

With a bachelor's degree in management and an associate's degree that focused on criminal justice, the 21 years Downey spent in the Corps have prepared him for success in several different career fields.

The hardest part of transitioning into a successful civilian career will be choosing a

job, he said.

"I still have no idea what I want to be when I grow up," said Downey.

While he said it is unlikely he will pursue a career in criminal justice or traffic management, he may fall back on skills he learned during what he called the most rewarding tour of his career.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a recruiter," said Downey. "I would like to try to be a corporate recruiter."

As a corporate recruiter, Downey would search out applicants for corporations ranging from trucking companies to Fortune 500 companies. Downey said finding a good employee is not unlike finding a good Marine recruit.

"The fundamentals are the same," said Downey. "The same qualities you would look for in an applicant for the Corps, you would look for in a potential employee. You look for honest, hard-working individuals."

If corporate recruiting doesn't go well, Downey will recruit for colleges, in effect competing against the Marine Corps for young men and women.

"There are plenty of high school students out there," he

said. "I couldn't single-handedly put the Marine Corps out of business."

In addition to all his civilian education, Downey has graduated as the honor graduate in almost every military school he has attended. He also has two certificates in Theology from International Bible Institute and Seminary. He achieved a perfect 4.0 grade point average while earning both Theology certificates as well.

When he isn't spending all of his free time buried in books, Downey is extremely active in his church. A devout Christian, he is quick to point out that none of his success is his own.

"I give all credit to God because all my blessings come from him," said Downey.

Set to retire this summer, Downey said the transformation back into civilian life will be a smooth adjustment. The one thing he won't have to adjust to is being able to pursue his other passion.

"I'm moving with my family to Colorado so I can spend time with the kids and grandkids," he said. "Whatever happens after that is unimportant. No college degree is as important as my family."